

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON THE VIEWS OF COAL PRODUCERS TOWARDS THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN COAL MINING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. Dr. Joseph J. Yancik, 1130 17th Street, Washington, D.C. 20036

The commercial use of significantly new or improved coal mining technologies requires a long-term commitment from a mine operator. The route to commercialization of new technology begins with the initial concept development and from there it must proceed in an orderly fashion in order to culminate in a mine-worthy system capable of producing coal on a daily basis. The time span may be from 15 to 30 years depending upon a large number of factors that can be grouped under two general headings. The first group includes those considerations which are related to the complexity and degree of innovation involved in the new technology. The second grouping involves factors which are specific to the mining operation, such as its location, life cycle and production requirements. It is important that research and development programs for new mining systems take into account the unique nature of the relationship between the mine site and the extraction system. Since mining occurs under a wide variety of geologic and geographic conditions, there are many different "sets" of requirements for extraction systems. This paper discusses the various roles which the federal government could best assume in the development of new mining systems with special emphasis placed on those aspects which are pertinent to the unique site specific demands of mining R&D. The paper also offers suggestions on how these roles should be planned and implemented to conduct cost effective programs and improve the chances of commercialization.